

Summarised inspection findings

Lady Alice Primary School Nursery Class

Inverclyde Council

21 January 2020

Key contextual information

Lady Alice Nursery Class is situated within the primary school campus and is managed by the headteacher. The setting provides up to 48 places for children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection, 30 children were enrolled in the setting. Importantly, the team are currently exploring timings and routines to support children's varying patterns of attendance. The setting operates from one large playroom and two outdoor areas and has access to school facilities, such as a gym hall.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- Overall, there is a need for senior leaders to improve the strategic approach to the leadership of change. In doing so, they should ensure any proposed changes are fully understood by all staff and are implemented with an appropriate pace of change.
- The headteacher, now in her third year in post, is working to re-establish a culture of positive change and direction with the nursery team. Day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the setting has been delegated to the depute headteacher. Senior leaders recognise that there is significant improvement required to ensure the delivery of high-quality early learning and childcare within the setting. Since taking up her post, the recently appointed senior practitioner has initiated change in the setting as part of the drive to improve the learning environment and children's experiences. Practitioners are motivated and work well together. Positive relationships based on trust and respect are developing well within the team.
- Practitioners are aware of the vision and aims of the school community and ensure the values of honesty, partnership, kindness, positive attitude and respect support their daily practice. They meet regularly with the depute headteacher to discuss aspects of practice and provision. However, these conversations do not focus enough on learning and teaching, and as a result, are not yet leading to improving the quality of early learning and childcare. The team has correctly identified the need to implement fully the use of national guidance documents to look in depth at their practice. A next step for senior leaders and practitioners is to identify how the setting is improving outcomes for children and where further work is required to improve the work of the setting. The team requires guidance and support from the education authority to ensure continuous improvement, with a focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching and children's progress.
- Practitioners engage in annual appraisal meetings. As a result, a few practitioners are beginning to take responsibility for aspects of practice. They should now explore current thinking and innovations in early learning. As their knowledge of this develops, it will be important for them to engage in professional learning to improve their practice and develop their skills. Practitioners value the opportunity to engage with colleagues from other settings to

increase their knowledge and understanding of early learning pedagogy. As planned, visits to other settings would help with the implementation of necessary improvements.

- The school's annual improvement plan includes priorities for the setting. During this current session, an improvement priority has been taken forward to improve the outdoor space to better support children's learning. As part of this, practitioners' regular planning for the use of open-ended resources, loose parts and natural materials is supporting children's exploratory play. Improvement planning processes should include the team's short and longer-term vision for the setting, based on robust, ongoing self-evaluation.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The level of children's engagement during their play is variable. A few children need more support to remain engaged in play throughout their time at nursery. Experiences are sometimes too adult-led or do not provide children with sufficient scope and time to develop their learning fully. The nursery team need to enhance opportunities for children to develop independence, challenge and depth across all aspects of their learning. The nursery team should work together to agree effective strategies for managing the structure of the day, to ensure that the pace of learning is improved and that all children are fully engaged and challenged in their learning. Children need to be better supported by practitioners to sustain and extend their skills and interests.
- Recent professional learning is supporting practitioners with their questioning approaches. In a few examples, practitioners are sensitive and responsive to children's learning needs during planned one-to-one experiences. However, experiences and interactions are not yet consistently high quality nor well matched to the needs of children. The team needs to ensure a better balance between enabling and interrupting children's play.
- Individual profiles contain observations and photographs of children's play. These are shared with parents formally and informally during the year. Practitioners currently undertake planned generic observations for all children. The nursery team need to develop their practice in gathering observations by recognising, evaluating and noting examples of significant learning in order to identify next steps for each child. The team recognises that the range and detail of information provided for each child is not yet consistent. As a result, practitioners are not able to use this information to effectively plan for children's future learning, to provide well-timed interventions or robustly track children's progress over time.
- Practitioners are at an early stage of developing their understanding of children as learners. Practitioners need to have more conversations with children about their learning, individually and in small, purposeful groups. A next step is to develop children's sense of themselves as active leaders of their learning. Children need to be enabled to develop the vocabulary to talk about their learning and plan next steps in their learning.
- Arrangements for planning for children's learning are in transition. New planning approaches have very recently been shared with practitioners but have not yet been fully implemented. This results in an absence of individualisation of learning and teaching. New documentation, including skills profile sheets and 'My Journey So Far' sheets have yet to be completed. As a matter of urgency, senior leaders and practitioners need to implement and evaluate these new approaches in order to ensure children are making the progress they are capable of. Responsive planning approaches to build upon children's interest now need to be explored and implemented by the nursery team. As practitioners increase their skills in responsive planning,

they should incorporate planned experiences that deepen children's skills. Practitioners could explore how local community partners and organisations could help to promote and deliver skills for learning and life.

- Arrangements to track, monitor and evaluate children's progress across the curriculum are not yet in place. Senior leaders have identified this as an area that needs to be implemented as a matter of priority. The nursery team need to develop their skills and confidence in using the range of data they gather to build a holistic picture of children's progress. This should clearly influence the next steps in the planning and delivery of learning to build upon children's prior learning.
- The school's moderation processes now need to include practitioners in the nursery class. Practitioners would benefit from opportunities to be involved both within and beyond the setting to ensure a shared understanding of progress and achievements. Practitioners require support to ensure their professional judgements are robust and reflect national standards.
- Practitioners make some use of digital technology, in particular to consolidate children's early numeracy skills. There is potential for them to improve the use of digital technology.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Senior leaders have not yet developed a curriculum rationale for the setting. Whilst practitioners are aware of the experiences and outcomes of the early level, they do not yet have an overview of the whole curriculum. Changes to practitioners' approaches to planning for children's learning are currently being developed. Practitioners should now identify the main drivers of the curriculum in the context of Lady Alice Nursery Class. As this develops, it will also be important for the nursery team to take full account of curriculum design principles. This will help them to develop high-quality experiences for children that reflect their interests and needs more effectively, and to be responsive to all children. Practitioners feel supported by senior leaders to make positive changes to the way the curriculum is delivered.
- Practitioners make daily use of the recently developed outdoor area. Practitioners would benefit from using national guidance on outdoor learning to ensure they are able to provide experiences that allow children to develop curiosity, inquiry and creativity. As outdoor learning develops, practitioners should encourage children to investigate during the course of their play.
- Practitioners recognise the importance of smooth and positive transitions for children moving onto school. Continuity in children's learning needs to be developed more fully as they transfer from the setting to P1.
- Further support from Inverclyde Council is required to help practitioners feel confident about planning and devising improved learning and development pathways.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

See choice QI

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- There is a friendly atmosphere in the setting, where children and families are made to feel welcome and valued. Practitioners give good attention to help children settle when they are new to Lady Alice nursery class. This supports children to develop a feeling of being safe and secure in their environment.
- Practitioners are aware of the importance of nurturing children's wellbeing. They are developing an understanding the principles of 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC). The nursery team should develop family learning opportunities to share and explore the wellbeing indicators with parents and children.
- Most children were observed to be kind and caring towards their peers. They are happy in the setting and enjoy the company of their friends and adults. Behaviour is positive with children developing the skills to play and work together. Most have an appropriate sense of fairness and demonstrate this through sharing toys and resources appropriately to their age and stage of development. Children should now be afforded opportunities to take on leadership roles and to develop the ability to make choices and promote their ideas in making decisions about matters that affect them in the setting.
- Practitioners place importance on getting to know children and their families well. As part of this, each child has an individualised care plan which gives useful information on children's care needs. These are reviewed at regular intervals. Practitioners are proactive in seeking appropriate support for children who are experiencing difficulties in their development and learning. They work with a range of partners to plan for individualised support for children. Where appropriate, individual plans and targets for children are created by practitioners. This good practice is addressing barriers to learning for individual children.
- Senior leaders and practitioners have a good awareness of the need to keep up to date with legislation, good practice and national guidance in order to ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties. In particular, the team are clear about their responsibilities to keep children safe.
- The setting has a nurturing and inclusive ethos. Practitioners know the socio-economic context of the community well and treat children and families fairly and with respect. There is potential for the nursery team to increase the range of resources and planned learning experiences to enable children to develop a better awareness of diversity in society.

3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Senior leaders and practitioners are unable to clearly evidence children's progress over time and how the nursery builds upon children's prior learning, development and skills.
- In early communication and language, most children are making satisfactory progress. Children are learning to take turns when speaking and are developing their awareness of when to talk and when to listen. Children enjoy listening to familiar stories, nursery rhymes and songs. This is supporting children to hear patterns in words. Children talk about their favourite stories and are supported by practitioners to act out stories using puppets. Participation in national book events and the establishment of a lending library is supporting children's use of fiction and non-fiction books. Children self-register for snack. This is supporting children's awareness of their names and the meaning of text. Increased use of environmental print and meaningful mark making opportunities would be a positive next step for practitioners to develop.
- In early mathematics and numeracy, most children are making satisfactory progress. Children's understanding of number is supported by the use of number songs and rhymes. Most children understand that numbers represent a quantity. They have regular opportunities to count in order. Most children can sort and recognise 2D shapes and explore 3D objects through their increasing use of block play and loose parts. Their language of measure is being supported through exploration and activities using the water tray and resources in the mud kitchen. In construction, children are confident in their use of the language of position including front, behind, above and below. Children are aware of the days of the week and are increasingly aware of the months of the year and seasons. Sand timers are used by the children, as well as visual timetables. Practitioners need to explore meaningful ways to develop children's understanding of money, creation of simple patterns and information handling.
- In health and wellbeing, most children are making satisfactory progress. Children are aware of which foods keep them healthy and enjoy a range of fruit during snack. Regular tooth brushing is supporting children to be aware of how to keep their teeth clean. Children are being supported to express their feelings and emotions appropriately. Children have access to the developing outdoor area and gym hall. This supports them in their physical activity to promote balance and movement during energetic play. They are increasingly aware of the changes that take place in their body after exercise. Children now need to increase their independence skills and have developmentally appropriate experiences that enable them to understand the wellbeing indicators in real and meaningful contexts. More opportunities to explore their local

community will support children to develop their sense of place and appreciation of the natural world.

- Practitioners support children's learning and achievements by offering praise and encouragement. However, children's wider achievements are not yet captured consistently. These now need to be routinely added to individual children's profiles. This will ensure practitioners have a holistic view of children's learning and wider achievements, built on through their nursery experiences. Children would benefit from more opportunities to contribute their views and ideas to the setting and the wider school community. For example, through involvement in pupil groups and reviewing the learning environment with practitioners.
- Practitioners treat children and their families with fairness and respect. They understand the challenges children and families face, and potential barriers to wellbeing and learning. Practitioners provide appropriate additional support to secure positive outcomes for children. Senior leaders should make improvements to assessment and tracking approaches, to ensure all practitioners understand children's progress over time. This will enable senior leaders and practitioners to measure the impact of interventions to ensure equity and make well-informed decisions about children's future development.

Choice of QI : 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
- The promotion of partnerships
- Impact on children and families

- Parents and carers are valued and welcomed into the setting. Initial settling-in processes are tailored to meet individual needs and allow additional visits for some children. Practitioners make time to complete the 'All about Me' booklets with the families as part of these early introductions.
- Parents are kept abreast of children's learning experiences by the information displayed in the cloakroom. Informal conversations with practitioners, access to children's journals and planned meetings helps parents to understand their children's progress.
- Through regular newsletters and social media, practitioners keep parents up to date with current events and ensure everyone is well informed. They plan to introduce 'stay and play' sessions for parents to share their children's learning. Practitioners regularly update journals to record children's play experiences. However, they recognise there is potential to increase parental contributions to the journals, in sharing children's successes and achievements from home.
- Practitioners are developing a range of partnerships with other professionals to support the setting and enhance children's learning. They are planning to be more involved with the local community. As part of this, there are plans to visit the local shop and the library to give children a sense of community. There is potential to develop these links and widen partnership working with a focus on providing children with additional real-life contexts for learning.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.